(c) As in statement I *(see* below).

(d) As in statement ll.

STATEMENT I

THE STEPS TAKEN APE AS GIVEN BELOW :—

1. Replacement of manual and electro mechanical exchanges by electronic ex changes.

2. Installing new electronic exchanges on large scale.

3. Providing adequate capacity power plant and stand by power supply. Use of non-conventional power energy like solar energy etc. wherever feasible in cases where normal electrie supply is not satisfactory.

4. Providing stable media for the circuits linking the rural exchange to the parent exchange.

5. Providing sufficient circuits to porvide STD and group dialling facilities;

6. Provision of upgraded outdoor plant for subs-lines and providing long distance public telephones and long distances connections on radio systems like M A R R.

STATEMENT -II

Yes, Sir. MAX-III electro-mechanical exchanges in the rural areas are proposed to be converted into modernised electronic exchanges and to provide STD facility to these rural exchanges pregressively including Andhra Pradesh Telecom Circle subject to the availability of resources.

VIABILITY OF EASTERN ZONAI. CORPORATION

2490. SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR SAHU: Will the Minister of Communi-cations be pleased so state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Zora-lising the existing telecom set-up arrived at by indepth stude at dmlerent levels have created doubt about the viability of the proposed Eastern Zonal Corporation;

(b) which are the states being included under different telecom operating zones proposed for the country ; and

(c) what are the viability prospects for Eastern Zone and what is the long term plan in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM) (a) to (c) Do not arise at present as the various aspects of the reorganisation of the Department of Telecommunications including financial viability in the event of Conalisation are still being studied.

BOOM IN TRAFFIC OP POST CARDS

2491. SHRI B. K. HARIPRASAD : Will the Minister of Communications te pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware (Economic Times dt. 28th November, 1993) of an unmanageable boom in the traffic of post cards in the wake of cultural|quiz programmes beamed on TV networks:

(b) if so, how much expenditure Government incur against the cost of 15 paise per Post Cards on handling each articles and the cummulative losses estimated for an year; and

(c) whether Government would consider banning of post Cards for commercial purposes including quix/ contest program-tries at the subsidised rat© of 15 paise and levy the commercial rate of 60 paise from users ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF (a) COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM) r (a) While it is known that postcards are used extensively for Quiz competitions broadcast on television, there is no report of unmanageable boom in traffic of postcards.